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Westminster, January 15.

HIS Majesty came this Day to the House of Peers, and being in His Royal Robes, seated on the Throne with the usual Solemnity, Sir Charles Dalton, Gentleman-Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a Message from His Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their Attendance in the House of Peers; the Commons being come thither accordingly, His Majesty was pleased to make the following most gracious Speech.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

THE happy Turn, which the Affairs of Europe have evidently taken since the End of the last Session of Parliament, must, I am persuaded, give you all, as it does Me, the greatest Satisfaction.

I acquainted you then that a Plan of Pacification, concerted between Me, and the States General of the United Provinces, had been proposed to the Parties engaged in the War, which had not the Effect to prevent the opening of the Campaign: The Armies took the Field, and the War was carried on in some Parts, in such a Manner, as to give very just Apprehensions that it would unavoidably become general, from an absolute Necessity of preserving that Balance of Power on which the Safety and Commerce of the Maritime Powers so much depend.

This Consideration determined Me to persevere, jointly with the States, in repeating our most earnest Instances to the contending Parties to agree to an Armistice, and to enter into a Negociation for obtaining a General Peace, upon the Basis of the Plan we had proposed to them.

Whilst Affairs continued in this State of Deliberation, the Heat and Fury of the War abated; and the Emperor, and the most Christian King, in Consequence of their repeated Professions of a sincere Disposition to put an end to the War by an honourable and solid Peace, concerted and agreed upon certain Preliminary Articles to answer that most desireable End. An Armistice is since agreed to by all the Parties engaged in the War; and the contracting Powers, in Regard to the good Offices imployed by Me and the States, have communicated to us, by their respective Ministers, the Preliminaries, desiring our Concurrence for effectuating a general Pacification upon the Terms thereby stipulated.

It appearing, upon due Examination, that these Articles do not essentially vary from the Plan proposed by Me and the States, nor contain any thing prejudicial to the Equilibre of Europe, or to the Rights and Interests of our respective Subjects, we have thought fit, in pursuance of our constant Purpose, to contribute our utmost towards a general Pacification, to declare, by a joint Resolution, to the Courts of Vienna and France, our Approbation of the said Preliminaries, and our Readiness to concur in a Treaty to be made for bringing them to Perfection.

These Preliminaries have been likewise communicated to the Kings of Spain, and of Sardinia; and although those Princes have not as yet, in Form, declared their final Resolutions upon them, there is great Reason to believe, that the Love of Peace, their avowed Dispositions for putting an End to the Troubles of Europe, and the amicable Interposition of Common Friends, will prevail upon them to agree to what has been thus concerted, upon reasonable Security given them, for the peaceable Possession and Enjoyment of the Countries allotted to them.

In these Circumstances, my first Care was to ease the Burthens of my People, as soon, and as far, as Prudence, in the present Posture of Affairs, would permit. I have therefore ordered a considerable Reduction to be made of my Forces, both by Sea and Land; and if the Influence of the Crown of Great Britain, and the Respect due to this Nation, have had any Share in composing the present Troubles in Europe, or preventing new ones, I am persuaded you will be of Opinion, that it will be necessary to continue some extraordinary Expence, until there be a more perfect Reconciliation among the several Powers of Europe.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I have ordered the proper Officers to lay before you the Estimates for the Service of the current Year; and I make no Doubt, but my Desire to make the Charge of the Publick as low as possible, will find in you the same Readiness to grant the necessary Supplies with Chearfulness and Unanimity.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I am willing to hope this pleasing Prospect of Peace Abroad will greatly contribute to Peace and good Harmony at Home. Let that Example of Temper and Moderation, which has so happily calmed the Spirits of contending Princes, banish from among you all intestine Discord and Dissention. Those who truly wish the Peace and Prosperity of their Country, can never have a more favourable Opportunity than now offers, of distinguishing themselves, by declaring their Satisfaction in the Progress already made towards restoring the publick Tranquillity, and in promoting what is still necessary to bring it to Perfection.

Hague,

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